

The Copied Hymns of John Young

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TODAY, PLAYLISTS of music from an individual's tablet computer or smart phone may be used to ascertain the songs that he or she enjoys. But from the beginning of the nineteenth century, before the invention of recording devices, scant evidence exists concerning what music individuals elected to listen to. An entry in the journal of John Young, war companion of Kamehameha I, nevertheless, provides a narrow glimpse into his musical tastes.

Young, an English boatswain, arrived in Hawaii in 1790 on the American trading ship *Eleanora*. After he was detained on shore, Young's ship eventually sailed without him. The stranding turned out to be fortuitous for Young. Adept in the use of Western arms, Young proved invaluable to Kamehameha the Great in his conquest of the island chain.¹ As a trusted advisor and friend of the king, Young was rewarded with large land holdings and served as governor of the island of Hawaii from 1802 to 1812,² or starting about 1800 according to Thomas Thrum,³ overseeing the collection of taxes.

He started a log book or journal in 1801, around the time he began as island governor, recording his observations and transactions. Embedded in the midst of journal entries about ship arrivals, weather conditions and fish catches, Young made one his longest entries, twenty-four lines of rhymed couplets and eleven lines consisting of a portion of three quatrains.

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FIGURE 1. John Young by artist, A. Pellion, published in Louis de Freycinet's *Voyage Autour du Monde*, vol. Atlas Historique, Paris, 1825, Book Plate 84, Hawaiian Collection of Paul Markham Kahn, AH.

COPIED HYMNS

A comparison of the lines in the journal to published nineteenth century works reveals the source of Young's entry to be two hymns by Isaac Watts. Perhaps best known for "Joy to the World," Watts wrote hundreds of hymns, gaining him the sobriquet, the "Father of English Hymnody." Born in Crosby, Lancashire, England, in the early 1740s, Young would have lived in England while the popular author of the two hymns was still alive; Watts died in 1748.

Young recorded the first hymn as:

Life is the time to serv the loard
the [uncrossed t] insure the great reward
and the lamp houlds out to burn

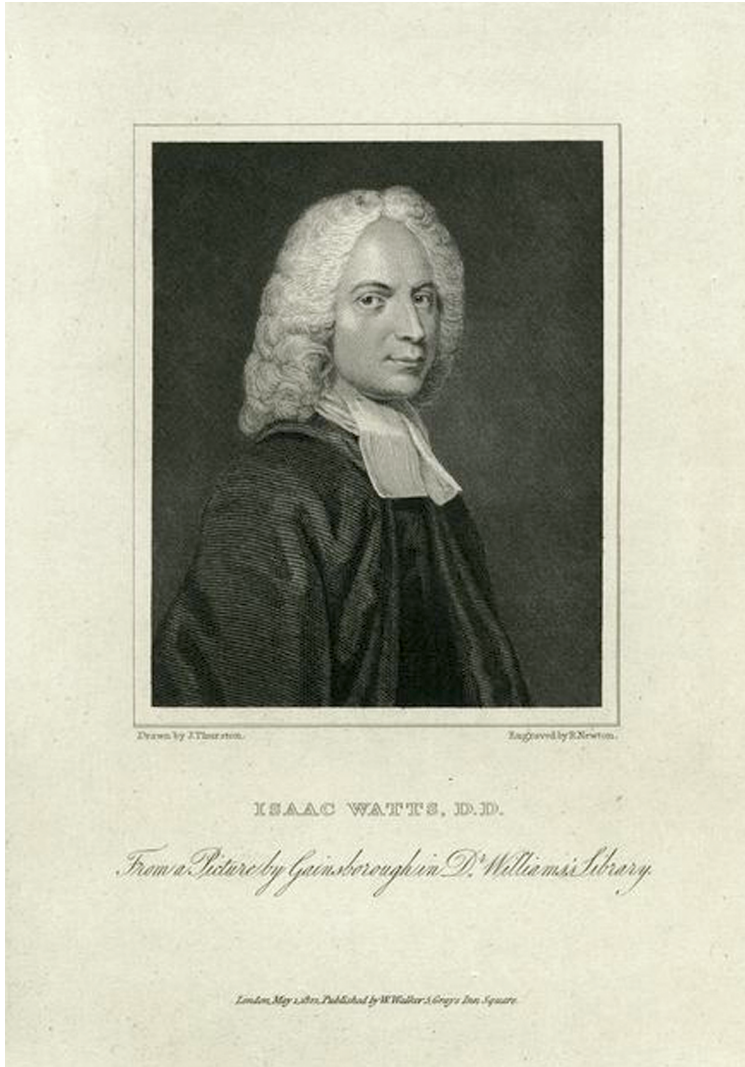


FIGURE 2. Isaac Watts was the author of two hymns that John Young copied in his journal. His *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, which contains both hymns, was owned by missionary John Emerson, a member of the fifth company sent to the Islands by the ABCFM in 1832. Courtesy New York Public Library.

the vilest sinner may return
 life is the ovr that god hes given
 to scape from hel & fly to hevn
 the day of greace and mortls may
 secure the blesings of the day
 the living no that they must dy
 but all the ded forget to lie
 their memory & their sences gone
 alike unoining & unown
 their hatred & their lov is lost
 their envy buried in the dust
 they have no share in all that is dun
 beneath the circuit of the sun
 then what my desins to dow
 my hands with all my might pursue
 sinc no device nor works is found
 nor feath nor hoape beneath the ground
 there are no acts of pardon past
 in the cold greave to which we heast
 but darkness death & long dispare
 rine in eternal silenc there⁴

The same hymn, numbered LXXXVIII [88], from the 1803 edition of *The Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament, and Applied to the Christian State and Worship, Book I*, reads:

- 1 Life is the time to serve the Lord,
 The time t'insure the great reward ;
 And while the lamp holds out to burn,
 The vilest sinner may return.
- 2 (Life is the hour which God has giv'n
 To 'scape from hell to fly to heav'n ;
 The day of grace, and mortals may
 Secure the blessings of the day.)
- 3 The living know that they must die,
 But all the dead forgotten lie ;
 Their mem'ry and their sense is gone,
 Alike unknowing and unknown.

- 4 (Their hatred and their love is lost,
 Their envy bury'd in the dust ;
 They have no share in all that's done
 Beneath the circuit of the sun.)
- 5 Then what my thoughts design to do,
 My hands with all your might pursue ;
 Since no device nor work is found,
 Nor faith, nor hope, beneath the ground.
- 6 There are no acts of pardon pass'd
 In the cold grave, to which we haste ;
 But darkness, death and long despair
 Reign in eternal silence there.⁵

The copied material is mostly faithful to the words of the printed version, but does not number the stanzas, put parentheses around optional verses, nor use the standard spelling, capitalization or punctuation that appears in the hymnal. Young drops the word “time” in line one, “while” in line four, and “thoughts” in line seventeen. He uses “forget to” instead of “forgotten” in line ten, “sences” instead of “sense is” in line eleven, and “past” for “pass'd” in line twenty-one. Young may have been transcribing a sung version or recording one from memory, because the journal uses his unique spelling.

Young also adds another eleven lines from another hymn:

Wheare the hoapes the suns of men
 one there oune works have bult
 their harts by neatur all uncleane
 and all their actns guilt
 let guses & gentls stop their mouths
 with a murrming word
 and the whole race of adm stand
 guilty befoare the loard
 in vane we ask gods rigtous law
 to justfy us now
 sinc to justfey⁶

The same hymn, also contained in the 1803 edition of *The Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament, and Applied to the*

Christian State and Worship, Book I, numbered XCIV [94], reads mostly the same:

- 1 Vain are the hopes the sons of men
On their own works have built ;
Their hearts by nature all unclean,
And all their actions guilt.
- 2 Let Jew and Gentile stop their mouths,
Without a murm'ring word,
And the whole race of Adam stand
Guilty before the Lord.
- 3 In vain we ask God's righteous law
To justify us now ;
Since—to [. . .]

Here Young ended his copied version at the eleventh line. The remainder of the hymn continues:

- [. . .] convince and to condemn
Is all the law can do.
- 4 Jesus how glorious is thy grace,
When in thy name we trust !
Our faith receives a righteousness
That makes the sinner just.⁷

Just why John Young ended his copy of the second hymn seven lines shy of the end, and corrupted the eleventh line ("since to just-fey" instead of "Since to convince, and to condemn") is not recorded. The next line following the hymns clearly returns to the usual content of the journal, referencing an inventory of forty feathers and five sows. As with the first hymn, Young drops words or portions of words in his copy; he replaces "Vain are" with "Wheare" in the first line, drops the "out" from "without" in line six and uses "my" instead of "your" in line eighteen.

The journal entry for both hymns is undated, though the preceding page is dated May 30, 1809.⁸ Young's journal, though, is randomly sequenced and the page following the hymns is dated "April Monday the 10 1825," though April 10, 1825, fell on a Sunday.

The choice of hymns may reflect hymns sung in his presence.

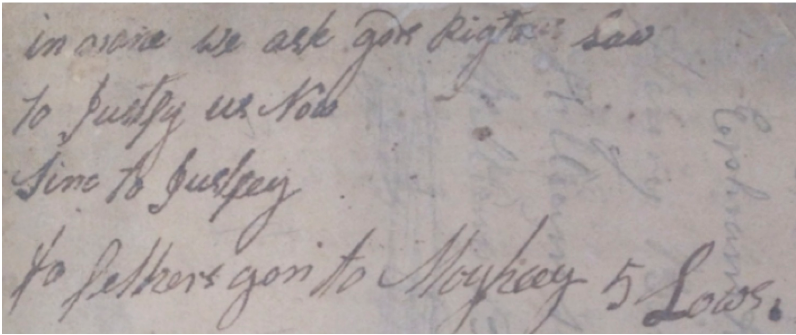


FIGURE 3. Facsimile page from the log book of John Young. Courtesy Hawai'i State Archives.

Young certainly heard hymns performed while he was in attendance. Elisha Loomis, a member of the first company of missionaries sent by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, wrote an entry in his journal, dated September 24, 1820: "Mr. Young has called upon me the two Sabbaths I have been at this place [Kawaihae]. To keep up the semblance of Sabbath worship, I have each time read a chapter from the bible, and extracts from some other religious book, and concluded by singing a hymn, and addressing the Throne of Grace. Mr. Young has always kneeled with me and seems desirous of preparing for that world into which he must soon enter. May the spirit of God enlighten his soul."⁹

Young would not die for another fifteen years, at age 93, on December 17, 1835; Loomis died less than a year after Young, on August 27, 1836, at age 36. Both hymns relate to what Loomis called "addressing the Throne of Grace"; Both sets of lyrics recorded by Young mention "grace": the "day of grace" in the seventh line of the first hymn, and "Jesus how glor'ous is thy grace," in the thirteenth line of the second hymn. The first hymn is preceded by the epigraph "*Life, the day of grace and hope, Eccl. ix. 4-6, 10.*"¹⁰ The second opens with "*Justification by faith, not by works; or, the law condemns, grace justifies. Rom. iii. 19-22.*"¹¹

The continuation of the journal entry by Loomis may also explain the unfinished second hymn: "About half past 4 this afternoon, as Mr. Young and myself were sitting in the house, having closed worship, we were alarmed by an earthquake."¹²

Young's handwritten copy of the hymns, the only recording of lyrics in his journal, would have contained content very much like the hymn books of the day. Most early hymnals contained only the texts of the hymns, along with the meter, with no musical notation. The hymn books were used in conjunction with tune books that usually contained the notes and meter with minimal or no lyrics. The meter recorded with the lyrics and music allowed singers to mix and match hymns with tunes. Although Young did not record the meter of the hymns in his journal, the printed versions do include the meter. The first hymn that Young copied is written in Long Meter, with eight syllables in each of the four lines (commonly notated as L.M. or 8.8.8.8.). The second uses Common Meter (C.M. or 8.6.8.6.) with eight syllables in the first line, six in the second, eight in the third, and six in the fourth. The hymns could be sung to any tune of the same meter: The first could be sung to the tune "Old Hundred," the same one used for Thomas Ken's "Doxology" ("Praise God from whom all blessings flow"); the second hymn could be sung to the tune of John Newton's "Amazing Grace."

Later hymnals would include a named tune in addition to the meter. The first text, "Life is the time to serve the Lord, The time t'insure the great reward," is first associated with the tune, "Bath," published in 1750 in *The Psalm Singer's Compleat Tutor and Divine Companion*.¹³ The second is not associated with a specific tune until it is linked to "Justification," around 1795,¹⁴ five years after the arrival of Young in Hawai'i.

What hymn book or tune book Loomis used is unknown; no hymnals or references to titles of hymn books or tune books exist for the first missionary company. A volume of *The Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs of the Rev. Isaac Watts*,¹⁵ published in 1823, did belong to one of the later missionaries. That copy, the oldest English language hymnal in the collection of the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society Library, was owned by John S. Emerson, of the fifth missionary company that arrived May 17, 1832. The volume included the two hymns recorded by Young, though hymn books containing the two hymns had been published since 1707 and 1708. The oldest tune book in the HMCS Library collection, *Christian Harmonist*, composed by Samuel Holyoke, dates to 1804, but neither tune associated with the Watts hymns is contained in the collection; there is a tune titled "Bath" in the vol-

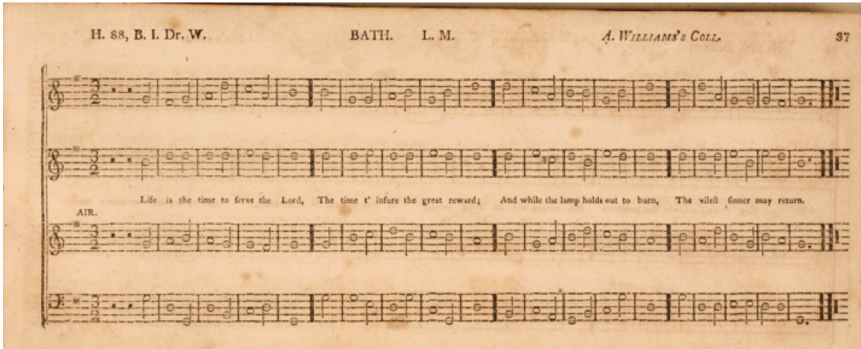


FIGURE 4. The tune “Bath” appeared in the tune book, *The Middlesex Collection of Church Music*, published in 1811. The tune book includes the words of the first stanza of the Watts hymn copied by John Young. Courtesy Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/stream/middlesexcollect1807bost#page/36/mode/1up>.

ume, but it has a meter with seven and six syllables per line instead of the eight syllables per line of the hymn by Watts.

OTHER RELIGIOUS CONTENT

The copied hymns stand in contrast to another lengthy portion of religious content in the John Young journal. Young recorded on another undated page:

A Lmighty god who hast givn
 us grace at this time with
 one a Cord to Make our Common
 Suplcations unto thee and Dost
 promis that when tow [t uncrossed] or three
 are gathrd together in they
 Name thou wilt grant their Requests
 Fulfil Now O Loard the
 Desirs and petions of they servents
 as May Be Most Expedeint
 for them granting us in this
 world knowlig of they truth
 and in the world to Cum Life Ever Lasting Emane¹⁶

Those lines were previously identified by Thomas G. Thrum as the “St. Chrysostom form prayer”¹⁷ in the *Hawaiian Almanac and Annual for 1911*, by the Right Reverend Henry Bond Restarick in 1924 as “a prayer from the English Prayer Book,”¹⁸ and by Russell A. Apple in 1978 as the “prayer of St. Chrysostom” in *Pahukanilua: Homestead of John Young*.¹⁹ Unlike the almost phonetic spelling of words in the two hymns copied by Young (“greace” for “grace” and “loard” for “Lord”), the spelling of words in Young’s version of the prayer is more standard, perhaps reflecting the copying of the text directly from the *Book of Common Prayer*. The most telling evidence that the prayer was copied from a printed version is the first word. The “A” of “Almighty” is separated with a space from the rest of the word, “Lmighty,” mimicking the drop capital and capitalization of the letters of the printed version. The place where Young starts a new line may also reflect the line breaks in the typeset column of the printed book. The line breaks in the 1790 copy of the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Episcopal Church tracks with the first five lines of Young’s version. “Grace” is spelled “grace” in Young’s version of the prayer, though he also spells “Lord” as “Loard.” Unlike the hymns, Young records every single word of the prayer. Young had access to the *Book of Common Prayer*; his close friend, Isaac Davis, is known to have owned a copy of an Anglican prayer book, now found in the Episcopal Church in Hawaii collection.²⁰ That edition of the prayer book, printed in 1767, has an inscription to Davis dated 1796. The book owned by Davis has different line breaks than the 1790 version, so probably was not the source of the prayer copied by Young. The inclusion of the prayer was used by Thrum as evidence that Young was “religious,”²¹ by Restarick that he was an

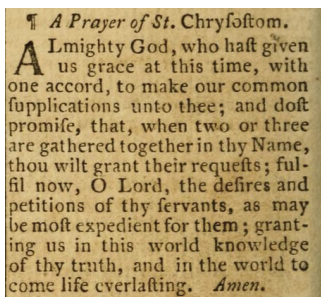


FIGURE 5. The capital “A” that drops down into the second line and the capital “L” in the remaining portion of the word suggests that Young copied the “Prayer of St. Chrysostom” directly from an edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Courtesy Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/bookomrayoepis>

“Anglican Churchman” [i.e. a member of the Church of England],²² and by Apple to indicate he was of the “Anglican persuasion.”²³

While the identity of the more familiar Prayer of St. Chrysostom has long been known, the specific source of the other lines of religious content in the journal—the two hymns—has remained heretofore unidentified, other than the broad reference in the *American Church Almanac and Year Book* that called them “verses of English hymns,”²⁴ and one by Restarick that called the journal entry “a religious poem.”²⁵

Though the inclusion of the Prayer of St. Chrysostom in the journal infers ties to the Church of England, the presence of the two hymns has quite the opposite implication. The author of the two hymns recorded by Young, Isaac Watts, was not a member of the Church of England; he was instead a Nonconformist, so named because he did not conform to the 1662 Act of Uniformity. If Young recorded the hymns from memory, it would imply that he grew up in a Nonconformist household or had attended a Nonconformist church, or if he had transcribed a sung version, that his source was non-Anglican. The American missionaries would have provided such a non-Anglican source.

Regardless of the source, Young’s reason for recording the hymns ultimately remains unknown. He, nevertheless, spent time to record words that evidently had some meaning for him. His entry in the journal gives a narrow glimpse into the musical likings of a man who otherwise left few personal written records.

NOTES

¹ Thomas G. Thrum, ed., “John Young: Companion of Kamehameha,” *HAA for 1911* (Honolulu, 1910) 94–103.

² Ralph Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom, 1778–1854, Foundation and Transformation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1947) 54.

³ Thrum, 100.

⁴ FO & Ex, Chronological File, 1790–1849, 1801, Series 402-2-4, J20a, AH.

⁵ Isaac Watts, *The Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament, and Applied to the Christian State and Worship, Book I* (Boston: Manning & Loring, 1803) 73–74.

⁶ FO & Ex, Chronological File, 1790–1849, 1801, Series 402-2-4, J20a, J21, J21a, AH.

⁷ Isaac Watts, 77–78.

- ⁸ FO & Ex, Chronological File, 1790–1849, 1801, Series 402-2-4 J20, AH.
- ⁹ Elisha and Maria Loomis, “Voyage to the Hawaiian Islands and the first 14 months there Oct. 23, 1819–May 24, 1821,” vol. 1, Sept. 24, 1820, p. 86. Journal Collection. HMCS.
- ¹⁰ Isaac Watts, 73.
- ¹¹ Isaac Watts, 77.
- ¹² Elisha and Maria Loomis, Sept. 24, 1820, 86.
- ¹³ Nicholas Temperley, *The Hymn Tune Index*, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, <http://hymntune.library.uiuc.edu/>, HTI source code: MoorTPS1 2.
- ¹⁴ Nicholas Temperley, *The Hymn Tune Index*, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, <http://hymntune.library.uiuc.edu/>, HTI source code: RadiAFS.
- ¹⁵ Samuel Worcester, *The Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D.* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, and Crocker & Brewster, 1823).
- ¹⁶ FO & Ex, Chronological File, 1790–1849, 1801, Series 402-2-4, J10a, AH.
- ¹⁷ Thrum, 101.
- ¹⁸ Rt. Rev. Henry B. Restarick, “English Influence Here in Hawaii, Attempted Revival,” *HA*, Apr. 13, 1924: 4.
- ¹⁹ Russell A. Apple, *Pahukanihua: Homestead of John Young* (Honolulu: National Park Service, September 1978) 78.
- ²⁰ *The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the Use of the Church of England: Together with the Psalter, or Psalms of David, Pointed as They are to be Sung or Said in the Churches.* (London: Mark Baskett, 1767), Episcopal Church in Hawaii, Diocesan Archives.
- ²¹ Thrum, 101.
- ²² Restarick, 9.
- ²³ Apple, 78.
- ²⁴ “Historical Notes,” *American Church Almanac and Year Book for 1914* (New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1914) 182.
- ²⁵ Rt. Rev. Henry B. Restarick, 4.